DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 440 192 UD 033 487

TITLE	Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium: Globalization, Education, and Technology. Special Report: National Policy Institute (8th, Washington, DC, January 20-22, 2000).
INSTITUTION	Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Washington, DC.
ISSN	ISSN-0740-0195
PUB DATE	2000-02-00
NOTE	21p.; Published monthly.
AVAILABLE FROM	Joint Center for Political Economic Studies, 1090 Vermont Ave., N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005-4961 ($15 per year). Tel: 202-789-3500.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Proceedings (021) -- Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Focus; Feb 2000
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Blacks; *Economic Factors; *Educational Attainment; Employment; Futures (of Society); Global Approach; *Income; Politics; *Technological Advancement; Workshops

ABSTRACT

This special issue presents, in capsule form, presentations from workshops at the Eighth National Policy Institute. The conference theme of black economic advancement in the new century focused on globalization, education, and technology. Ten workshops were the core of the conference, and their topics were: (1) overcoming the 2000 Census undercount; (2) redistricting and voter mobilization; (3) promoting selfsufficiency and preserving the safety net; (4) skills development in the workplace; (5) economic and community development in the new millennium; (6) housing and community development; (7) education; (8) wealth accumulation and economic parity; (9) learning and earning (racial discrimination); and (10) the information technology revolution. A special section was held to discuss HIV/AIDS in the African American community. Among the plenary presentations was "The Courage To Demand Change" by Johnnie Cochran. Also featured were "Building a Public Health Infrastructure" by Donna Shalala and "The Importance of the Next Presidency" by Mary Frances Berry. A final plenary presentation was "Transporting Jobs, Education, and Freedom" by Rodney E. Slater. (SLD)

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ED 440 192

February 2000

Eighth National Policy Institute
Special Report

FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium:

Globalization, Education, and Technology

8th national policy institute

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ISSN 0740-0195

PRICE $1.50

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Globalization, Education, and Technology

Every presidential election is important. But since President Clinton must by law vacate the White House at the end of his second term, the voters will select a new president. The contestants for that office have infused the campaign with a vigorous debate about how the nation should be governed. After the balloting in November, the political landscape will change. A new national government will be installed that may be guided by a different political philosophy. At least one house of Congress may have a new majority party. And new faces will emerge in governors' mansions and state legislatures.

I can't think of any time in the past when the quadrennial National Policy Institute, cosponsored by the Joint Center and the seven organizations of black public officials, was more relevant. The Eighth National Policy Institute's theme, "Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium: Globalization, Education, and Technology," reflects the world we live in and the challenges before us—not only in the public arena, but also in the private sector. Globalization has indeed characterized our economic lives.

No product is more than a few days away from virtually any customer on the globe. And thanks to the revolution in information technology, most of the world is an e-mail message or a phone call away. The burgeoning technology industry, computers, the Internet, and e-commerce have spurred unprecedented growth in the U.S. economy that has pushed unemployment down to 4 percent. And for the first time in three decades, the federal government is running budget surpluses.

But not everyone shares in the blessings of this prosperity. As the first decade of the new millennium begins, it remains unclear how many Americans will be left behind. This special issue of *FOCUS* reports on the analyses and strategies presented by the scholars, experts, and professionals assembled to lead NPI-8 workshops and plenary sessions. It includes summaries of the conference workshops on a variety of major issues. The first workshop summary addresses the 2000 Census. At the center of this discussion is the political and economic empowerment of minority and low-income communities whose members are undercounted in every census. Succeeding workshop summaries discuss strategies for the economic, political, and social advancement of black Americans at all points along the socioeconomic spectrum. As outlined in the piece on the "IT revolution," information technology holds out to African America a challenge and an opportunity. Those with the education and wherewithal to embrace this new wave of change will prosper in the digital economy. But as the digital divide widens, it is clear that too many are still being left behind.

This special edition also includes excerpts of the addresses presented at the conference by major figures, including defense attorney Johnnie Cochran, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, University of Pennsylvania professor and Commission on Civil Rights chair Mary Frances Berry, and U.S. Secretary of Transportation Rodney E. Slater. Roger Wilkins, the Clarence J. Robinson professor of history and American culture at George Mason University, led the Town Hall discussion during the conference wrap-up session on the closing day.

The Joint Center sponsored NPI-8 along with the Congressional Black Caucus, the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, the National Association of Black County Officials, the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Caucus of Black School Board Members, and the National Conference of Black Mayors. ■

Eddie N. Williams
PRESIDENT

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Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium

Special Report on the Eighth National Policy Institute

Following its tradition from past presidential election years, the Joint Center and the seven national organizations of black public officials cosponsored the Eighth National Policy Institute (NPI-8) in Washington, DC., January 20–22, 2000. The conference theme, Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium, placed a timely focus on three areas key to the future advancement of black Americans in the new century: globalization, education, and technology. The 400 participants in the conference included black elected officials, civil rights leaders, community activists, entrepreneurs, and clergy. NPI-8 was convened to provide a forum to discuss critical issues that will be foremost on the national agenda in this politically charged year as voters prepare to elect a new president, 11 governors, 33 U.S. senators, and all the members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ten workshops formed the core of the conference. In these sessions, practitioners and professionals with expertise on a broad range of issues engaged black leaders and policy makers. The workshops focused on the major near-term and long-term concerns of critical importance to African Americans. The issues—especially the census undercount, political participation, education, information technology, and discrimination—cut across income, regional, and generational lines. This special FOCUS *feature capsulizes the workshop presentations.*

Overcoming the 2000 Census Undercount

The 2000 Census will trigger congressional reapportionment and become the basis for the annual allocation of $200 billion to states and localities. The panel of this workshop stressed that those people who are missed in this decennial population count will not be factored into the equations that will help determine the political and economic well-being of their communities.

Moderator
Melanie L. Campbell
Executive Director
National Coalition on Black Voter Participation

Panelists
Brenda J. August
Chief, Partnership and Data Services Branch
U.S. Census Bureau

Roderick Harrison
Director, DataBank
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Wade J. Henderson
Executive Director
Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR)

The 1990 Census was the first decennial census in five decades that was less accurate than the preceding one. It missed 8.4 million people—the equivalent of the total population of New Jersey—the most severe undercount ever recorded. And another 4.4 million citizens were double-counted. Nevertheless, the proposed use of the most up-to-date and widely accepted scientific sampling techniques to adjust for undercounted populations was rejected last year by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5-4 decision (see "Supreme Court Strikes Census Sampling," *FOCUS*, March 1999). Meanwhile, the addition of multiple race category options has led to concerns that such categorizations can lead to even greater dilution and the undercounting of people of color.

The information yielded by each decennial census is a linchpin for many governmental and private-sector activities. As workshop panelist Brenda August of the U.S. Census Bureau pointed out in very direct and explicit terms, "the census is about power and money, resources and representation." In addition to affecting the allocation of funds in virtually every sphere touched by government—from education and civil rights enforcement to housing and the environment—congressional reapportionment and the formation of House district boundaries are based on census results. These results govern the distribution of between $180 billion and $200 billion annually, allocated between the states and local governments.

Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, added that "the census is one of the most pressing civil and human rights issues, in addition to its political and economic content. . . . We're a representative democracy, predicated on the assumption of one person, one vote. You're counted for the purposes of determining the allocation of political power. If you're missed in the census count, then you are not factored into the politics of your local community."

All the panelists emphasized that both fair political representation and fair allocation of funds and services are

Contributors to this feature were: Frank Dexter Brown, Mary K. Garber, Wiley A. Hall, 3rd, Ronald Roach, David C. Ruffin, and Deborah A. Williams.

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greatly threatened because of the Supreme Court's decision against census adjustment by scientific sampling. The Joint Center's Roderick Harrison noted that the undercount has been higher than the figures normally cited. "Actually, the census has missed more people than the net undercount figure," he said, "but has made that up because of duplications and overcounting." Moreover, since those missed and those overcounted were not distributed randomly, they do not cancel out but actually worsen the bias.

Henderson also noted that children, the elderly, and black males are especially prone to being undercounted. This is oftentimes due to people's changing addresses or living in multiple households.

Harrison warned that unless there's an extraordinary effort to mobilize participation, the net undercount this year could be even greater than that of the last census. Such extraordinary efforts are underway, the panelists emphasized, with partnerships between public- and private-sector groups, political organizations, and labor unions. Melanie Campbell, executive director of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, explained that her organization was involved with an "It's Our Future, Be Counted" campaign, and has partnered with the U.S. Census Bureau and other groups in education and mobilization efforts. Brenda August noted that a special outreach to children and young adults is part of the Census Bureau's push, since young people were more than half of the eight million people who were missed in the last census.

The most hotly discussed issue was the Census Bureau's change in its race category question, which now allows someone to be classified as of more than one race. A person who might have been classified as black in the past, may now choose to classify him or herself as black *and* white, or black *and* Hispanic, but if so, that person would no longer be classified in the black population as in past census surveys.

Henderson added that in previous censuses there have been limited boxes that individuals could check, perhaps six or seven traditional racial categories. This year, he explained, there are 63 possible permutations by which individuals can identify themselves. On the one hand, he noted, that seemed to pose no problem "because no one is concerned about allowing individuals to express their racial self-identification as a general matter." The question, he noted, is how information will be taken from 63 categories and computed so that it is used consistently with past aggregated census data when there were only six. All of the panelists expressed concern that multiracial categories are likely to reduce the count of the African American population with a consequent loss in representation and federal funds.

The NPI workshop reported on here, as well as other articles in FOCUS's *ongoing series on census topics, are part of a larger effort at the Joint Center to increase citizen awareness and encourage participation in the upcoming 2000 Census, especially among communities of color, which have historically been undercounted. Further information on this subject may be found at the Joint Center's census web page (www.jointcenter.org/census.htm) and links to other useful sites. The Joint Center gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the Ford Foundation in making all these efforts possible.*

Redistricting and Voter Mobilization

The 2000 Census is closely tied to black political participation in future elections. Members of this panel warned that the process of redrawing legislative district lines will probably involve numerous political and legal challenges, as was the case in the years following the 1990 Census. Other factors that affect black political participation are voter mobilization and the disenfranchisement of former felons.

Moderator
Sam Fulwood
Washington Correspondent
Los Angeles Times

Panelists
Laughlin McDonald
Director, Voting Rights Project
American Civil Liberties Union

Melanie Campbell
Executive Director
National Coalition on Black Voter Participation

Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins
President
League of Women Voters of the United States

A standing-room-only crowd of black leaders from across the nation gathered at the workshop on the future of black political participation, with particular emphasis on the issues of redistricting, the 2000 Census, energizing the youth vote, and lessons learned from the 1998 mid-term elections. The session was taped by C-SPAN. Laughlin McDonald of the American Civil Liberties Union began the discussion with an update on the status of redistricting cases and their potential impact on black political representation. In 1993, in *Shaw* v. *Reno*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of white plaintiffs who claimed that race had unlawfully been the primary consideration in the shaping of a majority-minority North Carolina congressional district. In a narrow 5 to 4 decision, the court found that the unusual shape of the district was evidence that race had outweighed all other factors in the drawing of district lines.

In *Miller* v. *Johnson*, a challenge to Georgia's redistricting plan, the High Court affirmed and expanded its earlier ruling. With redistricting cases from the 1990 Census still

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undecided, the upcoming 2000 Census will be followed by another round of redistricting. Many southern states must now walk a thin line in redrawing district boundaries since their legislatures are compelled to consider race in order to meet the requirements of the Voting Rights Act, yet race cannot be the predominant factor in district boundary decisions. More legal challenges are expected, so the fate of many of these legislative districts remains uncertain.

In passing the Supreme Court's new standards, a district's compactness is the essential criterion. According to McDonald, judges will be tolerant of other factors if a district simply does not look too oddly shaped. He suggested that legislators keep a contemporaneous record during the redistricting process to show what factors were considered. "Communities of interest," although an ill-defined concept, are an acceptable factor in drawing district lines, as are partisan political concerns. Redistricters can also shape districts likely to favor African Americans without referring to race, relying on demographic databases that reveal attributes associated with African Americans more than with other groups, such as partisan identification or economic status.

Fortunately, in recent elections, black incumbents in the South have been able to hold onto their seats despite new district lines that make their districts majority-white. Regardless of what happens with redistricting, McDonald believes that blacks will need to manifest extraordinary political will and mobilize voter turnout to prevent an erosion of their political influence.

Speaking after McDonald was Carolyn Jefferson-Jenkins, the first African American woman to hold the position of president of the U.S. League of Women Voters. Her comments centered around two surveys conducted by the League, one in 1996 and the other in 1999. The 1996 survey found that nonvoters felt that they did not have enough information about issues and failed to see elections' relevance to their lives. Nonvoters also tended to have no family history of voting. In response, the League recrafted its message: instead of emphasizing the ability to affect elected officials by voting, it stressed the impact that elected officials have on all citizens—through taxes, schools, trash collection, and the like. They targeted 25 areas to improve voter turnout. In those areas, they saw an increase of from 3 to 13 percent as a result. They used precinct walks to provide personal contact with potential voters. Building on that approach, in 2000 their campaign theme is "Take a friend to vote."

The League is also looking carefully at the impact of new technologies, such as Internet voting. In addition, it is putting out guides that translate "electionese" into plain language so that people can understand candidates' positions. Another issue consistently pushed by the league is campaign finance reform, which it considers to be a civil rights issue. Without it, Jefferson-Jenkins said, the process always favors incumbents.

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Melanie Campbell of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation emphasized three issues: the need to engage young people between the ages of 18 and 35, learning from the 1998 elections, and educating African Americans about the importance of the census for black political representation.

"Don't take the black vote for granted" was her summary of what was learned from the 1998 elections. Predictions from pundits to the contrary, African Americans did turn out at the polls to support those candidates who addressed their issues. Black voters provided the margin of victory in the gubernatorial races in Alabama, Georgia, Maryland, and South Carolina that year.

The workshop participants had a variety of questions and comments. They were particularly concerned about the likelihood of losing black political clout because of the new racial categories that people are allowed to check in the 2000 Census. Other issues that prompted considerable discussion were the possible use of alternative voting methods, such as the Internet and mail-in ballots and proportional and cumulative voting. Jefferson-Jenkins cautioned that issues of security and authentication must be addressed with regard to Internet voting.

Another question concerned the restoration of the franchise to convicted felons. McDonald stated that this would have to be done on a state-by-state basis. Many of the laws denying the vote to former felons were adopted after Reconstruction in the 19th century and intentionally included crimes that state legislators then thought were more often perpetrated by blacks, excluding what were perceived as "white" crimes. This disenfranchised caste that is denied any recourse to voting is growing.

Promoting Self-Sufficiency and Preserving the Safety Net

One of the most important uses of political power is to ensure that impoverished Americans and the working poor are not left behind as the nation's economy surges forward. Experts in public assistance asserted that as states reduce their welfare caseloads, they can do a better job of easing the transition from welfare to work.

Moderator
Terri Wright
Program Director
W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Panelists
Heidi Goldberg
Policy Analyst
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

Lisa Plimpton
Program Analyst
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)

More than three years after the federal government ended "welfare as we know it" by replacing the federal public assistance program with block grants to the states, questions remain about the change's impact on the nation's poor. The panelists at this workshop suggested ways states can construct programs that truly benefit low-income working persons.

The experts on hand are contributors to "Devolution on the Ground: Widening and Deepening the Public Dialogue," a collaborative project funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation involving the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the Center for Law and Social Policy, and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. The focus of the project is to inform elected and appointed officials, policymakers, and other leaders about the impact of welfare reform and the opportunities for creating innovative strategies within the new framework that will benefit low-income workers.

Heidi Goldberg, a policy analyst with the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities' State Low-Income Initiatives Project, addressed the fundamental question of how former welfare recipients are actually doing. She stated that caseload decline is the primary measure used to evaluate the reform's success. By that standard, the program is a great success—welfare caseloads have fallen by more than half since reform was initiated. At the same time, food stamp caseloads have dropped by more than a third, although this was not a target of the reform effort. And most former recipients have found jobs and work nearly full-time.

However, the down side is that most jobs held by former welfare recipients pay very low wages (less than $7.50 an hour) and few of the jobs offer healthcare benefits. Compounding the situation is the fact that their families are not receiving Medicaid, food stamps, or subsidized child care, even though most families leaving the welfare system still qualify for these benefits. Most alarming is the impact of welfare reform on the poorest segment of the population. Although studies show that disposable income has increased for all other groups, the poorest fifth of single-parent families actually has experienced a decline in their disposable income. In short, the precipitous drop in caseloads has not been matched by a corresponding decline in the rate of poverty.

Without help, the prospects for these new workers are bleak. A look at wages over five years for former welfare recipients showed that their hourly wages increased only slightly. Even this increase was due more to working longer hours than to getting higher wages. For a large proportion of recipients, wages actually *decreased* over the five-year period. Studies of employers revealed more bad news for low-income workers. Employers said they wanted workers with education and skill levels far beyond those possessed by most former welfare recipients.

While many states and organizations are tracking the progress of former recipients who are now working, little information is available about the status of families who have not found employment. Many welfare recipients face considerable barriers to employment, including low levels of education, limited skills, little work experience, discrimination, lack of transportation, poor health, and substance dependence. Nearly two-thirds of former recipients have two or more barriers, while over half had three or more.

Lisa Plimpton of CLASP presented possible strategies and opportunities for states to construct programs to aid all low-income families, not just former welfare recipients. She stressed that under current law, states have the funding and flexibility to develop new supports to help former welfare recipients make a successful transition to work, to expand needed services to other low-income workers, and to maintain the social safety net.

Possible strategies include: Cash incentives such as refundable tax credits to supplement earnings; cash bonuses to families who go to work and stay off welfare, as well as work expense stipends; outreach to eligible families to see that they receive the benefits to which they are entitled; expansion of Medicaid coverage for low-income parents; a sliding scale of payments for child care along with incentives for child care providers to offer nonstandard care; help with transportation expenses, along with funding of new public transportation alternatives where needed; and, finally, education and training incentives for former recipients that permit them to meet work requirements by attending college or training programs or stop the five-year time-limit clock during training or education. Also, states could use tuition assistance, tuition waivers at state schools, subsidies to employers who provide training and publicly funded jobs for those persons who cannot find work elsewhere because of inexperience.

Skills Development in the Workplace

Low-skill, high paying jobs have virtually vanished from the workplace. In the current environment, many attempting to escape the lower rungs of the economic ladder, especially young African American men, must overcome deficits in technical and interpersonal skills to compete for higher paying jobs.

Moderator
Paul Cole
Vice President
American Federation of Teachers

Panelists
Robert Lerman
Director
Urban Institute

William Spriggs
Director of Research and Public Policy
National Urban League

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"Learning is the new form of work and is at the heart of productivity in today's workforce," said Paul Cole as he kicked off the session on Skills Development. Cole, who is with the American Federation of Teachers, added that in the last 30 years there has been a steep decline in the number of low-skill but high paying jobs, such as those in the auto industry, since many U.S. manufacturers have moved their labor operations overseas to employ less expensive workers. "The American worker in the twenty-first century will have to bring more brain power to the job in order to compete in the new global marketplace," Cole said.

"The battle is not for the market share or capital, but talent," said Cole, who is also a member of the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCAN) at the U.S. Department of Labor. SCAN advocates a set of policies that will focus on national skills standards for American workers. The foundation skills for SCAN include problem solving and other cognitive skills, oral communication, work ethic, and interpersonal and teamwork skills. "Workers need more front-line skills and education to meet the rising skills requirements," said Cole. "To make those principles a reality, the nation's schools must be transformed into high-performance organizations." To develop skills in the general population, "the nation's school systems should make the SCAN foundation skills and workplace competencies (resources, interpersonal skills, information systems and technology) explicit objectives in instruction at all levels."

Figures from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show that two out of three new jobs between 1988 and 1996 have been in technical, professional, or managerial positions. "There has been a rise in the number of service industry and McDonalds type jobs. However, 25 percent of all new jobs have been in the professional field," said Robert Lerman, director of the Urban Institute. The projections from the Bureau also show that professional and managerial jobs will continue to grow at an annual rate of 27 percent, as compared to 14 percent in all occupations.

"High-risk youth and those who don't have a high school diploma or GED will be left behind," Lerman noted, "as the economy and workforce continue to absorb a highly skilled and educated labor force." Lerman concluded his presentation with an example of a high school career-focused program that has been successful in improving skills transfer and retention rates. "Wisconsin has an elaborate youth apprenticeship program that offers a two-year stay with an employer," he explained. "During this time the student gains high standards and certification. The focus in 2000 should be on motivation and delivery."

William Spriggs of the National Urban League said that although globalization is important, we have to look at what is happening with low-skill jobs in the U.S. on the state level. "There is a lot of inequality and flip flops on the local level," Spriggs said. "What really matters locally are issues such as living wages, training policies, labor market institution polices, and also the role of affirmative action." Spriggs noted that African American males still have low employment rates. "National training programs are good but we need to look at policies that equalize things on a state level as well."

Another issue Spriggs raised stems from the question, "What do the skills get you?" He noted that wage growth has been slow and we need to examine the connection between low wages and low skills to figure out how best to close the gaps. The work force is better educated today and employers are taking advantage of better-trained workers. "Globalization has had a dramatic impact on the low-skilled and low-educated worker, and the inequality picture is complex," said Spriggs. In his conclusion, Spriggs asserted that to sustain a high rate of growth in the economy, policy and skill training matter more now.

Economic and Community Development in the New Millennium

Many African Americans are trapped in inner-city neighborhoods blighted by dilapidated dwellings and crime. This workshop looked at development strategies that could revitalize these communities.

Convener
Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich
Executive Director
Black Leadership Forum

Panelist
Stacey H. Davis
President and CEO
Fannie Mae Foundation

Stephen Coyle
Chief Executive Officer
AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust

Ramona H. Edelin
Executive Director
Congressional Black Caucus Foundation

Economic development in impoverished communities will require greater collaboration among grassroots community groups, the private sector, and government than has been seen in the past, according to panel members at the Black Leadership Forum's Lamplighter Think Tank workshop. Yvonne Scruggs-Leftwich convened this as the third in a series of Lamplighter workshops during the conference.

Much of the discussion revolved around the assessment of current economic conditions and the climate for development in grassroots communities. Stacey Davis, president and CEO of the Fannie Mae Foundation, spoke of favor-

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able trends, lauding the growing significance of community development corporations (CDCs) as a force for change. "We've seen tremendous growth in the number of CDCs that are dedicated to the redevelopment of their neighborhoods," Davis said, noting that CDCs are currently responsible for 30 percent of the affordable housing being built in the U.S. She added that CDCs have become more aggressive as government has begun to play a smaller development role.

"The role of government has changed as governments recognize that they can't address the problems of low-income communities alone," said Davis. The Fannie Mae Foundation has stepped in to examine "ways communities can market themselves to attract. . . sustainable development," according to Davis. "At Fannie Mae, we're working on some tools to help [communities] do that marketing."

Stephen Coyle, CEO of the AFL-CIO Housing Investment Trust, presented a more dire outlook. The economic trends of the past two decades have helped create an ever-larger number of poor and working poor people in the United States, according to Coyle. "As many of us have prospered in recent years, things are not better for the tens of millions of poor people in this country," he said.

Coyle says it's critical for community development organizations to find a way to make tax and investment laws work on behalf of their communities. He noted that Reagan Administration urban development policies forced more responsibility onto local and state governments, making it necessary for local organizations to play a larger role in community and economic development now than in the past. "A host of new strategies are needed. This is the last generation that can do something before this [wide] separation between [economic] classes becomes permanent," Coyle warned.

Ramona Edelin, executive director of the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, cautioned the audience that public officials, community activists, and developers have a tremendous task in motivating and mobilizing the impoverished black and Latino people living in distressed communities. Too many people have not been connected to the resources that would enable them to participate in their local development. "People with no external resources have to be connected to CDCs," she said. The task of making people understand their potential is significant, Edelin argued, because poor blacks and many Latinos still feel powerless due to the stigma of being an oppressed minority in the U.S.

"This village has to declare victory over stigma," Edelin said. The discussion grew lively after Coyle asserted that minority activists, minority residents, and minority developers have a bigger task in developing and mastering economic strategies than worrying over how to motivate community residents. A few audience members responded that Edelin's people-empowerment focus should not be underestimated.

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Where We Live: Housing and Community Development

If communities are to develop in ways that are sustainable, with adequate and affordable housing for all, federal policies and corporate practices may need to be revisited.

Moderator
Jerome Harris
Executive Director, Urban and Public Policy Institute,
Rowan University of New Jersey

Panelists
Roland Anglin
Senior Vice President
Structured Employment and Economic
Development Corporation

Stacey H. Davis
President and CEO
Fannie Mae Foundation

Barbara Sard
Director of Housing Policy
Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

The focus of this workshop was on low-income housing. Ronald Anglin of the Structured Employment and Economic Development Corporation expressed concern that many urban centers were starved of the financial resources that could support the construction of housing for low- and moderate-income residents. He added that too many of these communities are victim to the globalization of capital. Community development corporations (CDCs) are among the few advocates for these communities, or as Anglin put it, their voice at the table. He noted that residents of these communities need to be represented in high-level meetings when issues like land-use policy and the construction of municipal capital projects are being decided. Too often, these matters affect communities that have little or no involvement in the decision-making process. Anglin added that CDCs can be a bridge between community residents and municipal decision makers and the private sector.

Stacey Davis, president of the Fannie Mae Foundation, said, "at a time of historic economic growth, there are still pockets of poverty. The question is, how do we channel more resources and investment into areas of greatest need?" She concurred that CDCs and other nonprofit organizations play a "very important role and sometimes the leading role in producing housing for low- and moderate-income families." According to Davis, 64 percent of all CDCs are focused on housing development. She noted that between 1994 and 1997, CDCs produced 245,000 housing

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Justice, Health, Education, and Transportation

Major Addresses by National Figures Kicked Off and Punctuated NPI Workshop Sessions

The Courage to Demand Change

JOHNNIE COCHRAN, who gained national fame as the lead attorney in the O.J. Simpson murder trial, was the initial speaker at the opening plenary on January 21. He said that with the new millennium, African Americans must embrace a "new civil rights frontier" centered on economic advancement. But his main theme was racial profiling as a barometer of racial justice in the United States.

Cochran was deputy city attorney for the City of Los Angeles from 1963 to 1965 and the assistant district attorney for Los Angeles County from 1978 to 1980. In private law practice since 1981, he heads The Cochran Firm, also based in Los Angeles. He has received numerous awards for his achievements as a trial lawyer and has been a guest-lecturer at the Harvard University School of Law. His autobiography, Journey to Justice, *was a best seller. The following is excerpted from his plenary presentation.*

I think a lot about justice and racial justice in this country. It's important for all of us to do that, don't you think? Now we have something called profiling. We have a number of cases we're dealing with in New York and New Jersey known as DWB, driving while black—being spotted by the police when you go down the highway. It's not only driving while black. It's walking while black, it's shopping while black, it's running while black, it's living while black, breathing while black.

We have a case, known as the New Jersey Four, showing how the power structure deals with this. Four young men were on their way to try out at North Carolina Central University for a basketball scholarship. They were stopped by troopers on the highway and shot, point-blank, 11 times. Fortunately, these young men didn't die. When the police looked inside the car, all they had was a Bible, their clothes, and a John Steinbeck novel.

Governor Christine Todd Whitman and all the authorities in New Jersey said, "We don't have racial profiling." But yet we knew differently. African Americans are probably 17 percent of the drivers, but they're 80 percent of those stopped by police on our highways. When you look at those who are stopped by a helicopter, where you can't see in the car, it's more in line with what the population numbers are. So we use these statistics to say to these people, wait a minute, what are you talking about? This is profiling. You're stopping somebody because you suspect them stereotypically by what they look like. The State of New Jersey has now admitted it, because the Justice Department was coming in, and they have to stop the practice. These officers [in the New Jersey Four case] were given two separate indictments, one for lying in the reports they wrote, and the other for attempted murder.

Is there a systematic and widespread effort by the bar of advocacy lawyers to take these police officials to task? I don't know that it's systematic, but I know there is an evolving bar—we call it the police brutality bar—that looks at these cases. When I first started handling these kinds of cases in Los Angeles in 1965, in the history of Los Angeles no one had ever won a case against any police officer for police abuse. Now you see these cases with greater regularity.

The cases of Amadou Diallo and Abner Louima in New York are cases that I've been involved in. It's made a difference to send a message. The police officer who assaulted and sodomized Mr. Louima in Brooklyn got 30 years in prison. And that sends a real message that this cannot be tolerated.

There are other problems with the Diallo case. It's now been moved to Albany, New York. You can imagine going from the Bronx to Albany. But you've got to stay the course. And I give Reverend Al Sharpton a lot of credit for bringing attention to it. In the Diallo case, 1,200 people—from priests, rabbis, Susan Sarandon, Danny Glover, you name it, regular African Americans and all kinds of Americans—went to jail [in protest].

And when they resolve these cases, they've got to also institute some changes so these things don't happen again. It's not just about money. It's got to be about some other things, where you institute things like cameras in police cars, keeping statistics, videotaping alleged confessions and interrogations. We have a list of things we try to do in every community when we resolve the case. It's just important to do that. . . .

Some would have us never talk about the issue of race. They will say all kinds of things. That you are playing the race card, that you are bringing up race, using race as an excuse. But it seems to me that things will never change unless we have the courage to demand change.

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Building a Public Health Infrastructure

U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services DONNA SHALALA followed Cochran at the opening plenary. In her current post, she has led the administration's effort to extend immunization and health insurance to more children in low-income families and to ease access to improved medications for HIV and AIDS treatment. Noting in her address that African Americans have a higher incidence of life-threatening diseases and chronic health problems than whites, Shalala called for narrowing these disparities by shoring up the public health infrastructure.

Shalala was appointed secretary of Health and Human Services in 1993. From 1987 until she took the helm of the department, she was chancellor of the University of Wisconsin. Earlier, she held positions as director and treasurer of the Municipal Assistance Corporation in New York and as president of Hunter College. Excerpts from her address follow.

At a time when our economy is creating more new opportunities than ever before, there are still too many Americans standing on the outside looking in. They're suffering and dying from illnesses which can be prevented.

Heart disease and stroke? African Americans are hit twice as hard. Tuberculosis? Three times as hard. African American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than any other group of American women. And the growing epidemic of childhood obesity among African Americans will bring even more diabetes, heart disease, arthritis, and premature death. . . . Research also shows that racial and ethnic minorities tend to be less frequently immunized, screened for cancer, or receive regular primary care.

That's why I'm convinced that the principal challenge facing policy makers isn't just building economic infrastructure, it's also building a public health infrastructure. Let me be clear: We don't have all the answers—and we in government can't do it alone. But I'm proud to say that we've made measurable progress in closing some of these gaps. . . . Today, 73 percent of African American children and 75 percent of Hispanic children are fully vaccinated. Our experience tells us that the problem isn't so much one of science or technology as it is leadership.

That's why in 1998, President Clinton and Vice President Gore committed our nation to work not just for the reduction of but the elimination of racial and health disparities in six critical health areas by the year 2010. Those areas are infant mortality, diabetes, cancer screening and management, heart disease, HIV/AIDS, and adult and child immunizations. These are health problems that we're working to prevent and treat every day. And we're investing $400 million to reach our goal.

Nearly all these problems are compounded by a crisis of access. Today, more than 43 million Americans have no health insurance. And far too many of them are minorities. That's one reason why we created the State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). And it's why we're expanding our Medicaid outreach efforts.

Together, CHIP and Medicaid are guaranteeing healthcare for millions of children from low-income families who otherwise wouldn't have it. But we know we can do better. And so does President Clinton. That's why this week we took the next logical step. In the budget that President Clinton is sending to Congress, he has proposed funding for states to enroll children in CHIP up to age 20, and funding to enroll eligible parents in the same health insurance program as their children, because we realize that parents who have healthcare themselves are more likely to get care for their children. If CHIP and Medicaid are to continue to succeed, we need all of you working as our partners at the state and local levels. Some of you have already joined us in the effort, enrolling eligible children, and actually helping get them the care they need.

When we talk about access to healthcare, we need to recognize that it isn't simply a question of insurance. It's also a matter of health education. Many health problems—heart disease, diabetes, cervical cancer, and HIV—are preventable and treatable. . . . We haven't always gotten the right information to the right people at the right time in the right way. That's why we need to do a better job researching what it takes to change unhealthy behavior, craft culturally sensitive messages, and build alliances that can help make change happen.

For example, there are no more vocal advocates for African American health than the Congressional Black Caucus. They're a powerful ally in our fight against HIV/AIDS. Because nowhere is the gap in health outcomes for African Americans more apparent, and more tragic, than HIV/AIDS.

Overall, we've made amazing progress against AIDS since 1993. Mortality, for example, has been reduced by more than 70 percent since 1995. . . . But still, two-thirds of all *new* AIDS cases in 1998 were among racial and ethnic minorities. . . . And about 189,000 African Americans live with HIV infection—that's more than any other minority group. In fact, HIV/AIDS is now the leading cause of death in all African American males, aged 25-44.

That's why I'm extremely proud to announce today the release of $527 million in Ryan White CARE Act grants. These grants will fund primary health care and support services for low-income individuals in the 51 communities hit hardest by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. . . .

One of the single most important steps to ending racial and ethnic health disparities is to increase the number of minority physicians. That's why affirmative action in medical admissions isn't simply a matter of righting past wrongs. . . . it's also a matter of public health. And it's about time we talk about it that way. . . .

The time has come to fight these disparities with renewed determination. One of the ways we'll fight is by setting the same health goals for all Americans. . . . not one health goal for one group and another for the next. To

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eliminate disparities, we'll need your ideas, advice, and leadership at the grassroots community level.

The Importance of the Next Presidency

MARY FRANCES BERRY, the Geraldine R. Segal Professor of American Social Thought at the University of Pennsylvania, was appointed to chair the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights by President Clinton in 1993. An activist and scholar, Berry said in her luncheon presentation that tried-and-true approaches to improving education should be applied to public schools to ensure that all children receive quality schooling. She noted that this is a very important election year, indicating that the next president's judicial appointees will determine the course of justice in the United States for a generation.

Berry was first appointed as a member of the commission in 1980. President Reagan removed her from the commission in retaliation for criticizing his policies, but she successfully sued and was reinstated. During the Carter administration, Berry served as assistant secretary for education. Prior to that, she was provost of the University of Maryland at College Park and chancellor at the University of Colorado at Boulder. Berry was one of the founders of the Free South Africa Movement and was jailed several times in the cause of ending apartheid. She has written numerous books, most recently The Pig Farmer's Daughter and Other Tales of American Justice: Episodes of Racism and Sexism in the Courts From 1865 to the Present. *She holds a law degree and a doctorate in history. The following is excerpted from her presentation.*

One of the real issues that we must ask all of our political leaders and ask ourselves is how are we going to make sure that capital is invested in underdeveloped markets in the United States. And we focus on Wall Street because that is where the money is. The Commission on Civil Rights did a study and had all of the big Wall Street firms send in, under subpoena, the records of their employment. And after that, these firms began immediately responding to the new demographics. Now they have ads in the paper with people of color in them.

Now, I always thought that in order to work on Wall Street you had to be very highly educated. But at our hearing, the chief economist at Bear, Stearns & Co. Inc. testified under oath that the best training to be a broker was something like being a good high school coach, someone who was gregarious and could talk to people. So there is plenty of money to be made in professional categories in which a high school degree is adequate.

On the human capital side, education, grades K through 12, is most important. There are some people who think that if you change the way we elect or appoint a school board, that will solve the problem. But that doesn't make one whit of difference in the school. In some cities they say we should have a rule that if the principal's school doesn't have test scores that are up by X amount next year we are going to fire the principal. Studies show that that does not make schools better either. Some people say if you have vouchers, that will make the schools better, because then the schools will compete, you see. But that doesn't work either.

There is lots of research on what makes schools better. What makes schools better is if you have the students in a place where there is no rain coming in the roof, where it is heated in the winter time and cool in hot weather, where the students are not hungry, where the teacher does not feel that he or she is going to get beaten up by the students, where the teacher is getting paid adequately and is not burned out from year to year dealing with problems that no one will help them with, where the students have materials that are usable, up-to-date, and the teacher is trained to use, and where there are enough teachers and other personnel to pay attention to the students. The other thing that we must do about education is figure out a way to equalize financial resources to the schools. Now, money is not everything, but money is certainly something. I was in some schools for a hearing we held down in the [Mississippi] Delta where the kids had textbooks in civics, and the president on the last page of the last chapter was Richard Nixon.

Concerning police-community relations, we [the Civil Rights Commission] are about to do a report on New York City, and then we are going to do a nationwide report. We have learned that there are cities that have crime rates that are down, where they don't harass people because they are colored. If that's true, then how come New York can't do the same thing?

Finally, the court system—if we do not get the [federal] courts back we will be in trouble for a generation. And so who is elected president this year is very important. You certainly don't want to be walking around in a country with Clarence Thomas as chief justice handing down decisions that are inimical to everything that we stand for. [The courts are making decisions that say] you can't enforce federal laws in some of the states. If you can't enforce the Equal Pay Act in the states, pretty soon they'll say you can't enforce federal civil rights laws.

It was all brought home to me when two weeks ago [the U.S. Supreme Court] decided a case that said that if you try to get away quickly or run down the street when you see the police coming, they can go after you and arrest you because you have probably done something wrong. And I was outraged at that decision. I had my first encounter with the law when I was four. I was playing with my cousins and all of a sudden a motorcycle raced up into the yard. There was a man on this motorcycle in a uniform. And he raced through us little kids around and around in a circle on this motorcycle. And we scattered like baby chicks as fast as our little legs could take us. And he rode up to one of the kids and said, "What day is this?" And the kid said, "Monday." And he said, "Call me Mr. Monday," and tried to run over the kid. The kid ran

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and then he went riding around in circles and raced off down the street and left us all crying. We finally calmed down and one of the little kids asked, who was that man? An older cousin said that man is a police officer. That was the first I knew what a police officer was.

How many people have had experiences with police which make them see the police not as guardians but as people who are coming to harass them? What about immigrants who come to this country from places where when the police come towards you they are going to kill you, and whose idea would be to turn and try to get away? What about Amadou Diallo?

I am not telling you this to bash police officers. That isn't the point. We want protection like everybody else. But the Supreme Court is so insensitive to the reality of people's lives to say in an opinion that if people aren't doing anything they won't mind if they see a police officer come—they'll run toward him rather than away. It shows you how far we have to go no matter what our past has been.

Transporting Jobs, Education, and Freedom

RODNEY E. SLATER, secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation, was the conference dinner speaker. He spoke of transportation as a means of social change throughout our history. He also described Clinton administration programs to improve aviation among African countries and expand air travel between Africa and the United States. Slater was named secretary of transportation in February 1997, placing him over a department with 100,000 employees and a budget of more than $40 billion which includes the United States Coast Guard. Slater has worked to ensure that low-income Americans have access to public transportation. He also has launched the Garrett A. Morgan Technology and Transportation Futures Program aimed at attracting one million young people to transportation careers.

During President Clinton's first term, Slater was administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. From 1987 to 1992 he was a member of the Arkansas State Highway Commission, serving as its chairman in 1992. He has received numerous honors and awards, including the Congressional Black Caucus's 1998 George Collins Award for Community Service and the National Bar Association's President's Award. The following is excerpted from his remarks.

We are making good use of Transportation dollars, and I'm very pleased to be in an administration that understands the importance of transportation. We know that it's about more than concrete, asphalt, and steel, that it's about people at its core. . . . It represents the means through which so many have come to this great land in search of opportunity. Whether they were in the number that boarded the Mayflower, or whether they found themselves crowded in the belly of slave ships, whether they arrived more recently at LAX, or made their way across the U.S./Mexico border, they have all used this means of movement to propel them forth in their journey.

Transportation is a powerful thing. It gives us access to jobs and opportunity. It gives our children access to quality education. It gives us access to all of the beautiful sights that make up America the beautiful. But it's much more important than that. It represents our effort to make our move from slavery to freedom, as evidenced in the significant and magnificent Underground Railroad.

It was the place where Homer Plessey sought to make his stand more than a hundred years ago, to sit anyplace on a train. It was the place where Rosa Parks made her stand, to sit anyplace on a bus. It represents the thing that propelled the Freedom Riders forward in their effort to give us access to all accommodations. It is, in many respects, the spirit of the movement that conjures up the metaphor, transportation.

Transportation is a powerful thing, and I and all who are part of this wonderful industry represent 16 percent of our gross domestic product and 11 percent of all the jobs in the country . . . .

Today, aviation is going to be for the world in the 21st century what for us the construction of the interstate highway system was in the second half of the twentieth century, which connected us as a nation to a greater extent than the railroad system of the 19th century.

We move only 3 percent of our cargo by plane, but aviation accounts for 45 percent of the value of all cargo that moves. So if you are producing fruit and beautiful rare flowers and moving diamonds and other precious minerals, aviation becomes very critical in that regard because a lot of it is time-sensitive.

In Senegal, at the end of his trip to Africa in 1998, the President announced his Safe Skies Initiative to increase air links between Africa and the rest of the world. In September of this past year, I joined Ambassador Andrew Young in hosting the transport ministers of 42 African nations in Atlanta at the Carter Center. When President Obasango of Nigeria came to the United States, his main request of President Clinton was to help to lift the ban on flights between the United States and his country. We will soon have direct flights between the United States and Nigeria.

We had the first direct flight from South Africa to Atlanta last month because of a new relationship between Delta Airlines and South African Airways. We also have direct flights between Ethiopia and Dulles International Airport in Washington, D.C., and we're looking forward to other opportunities as we go forward.

The other thing that we've done is establish our Open Skies agreement with Tanzania. It's our most advanced form of aviation arrangement. That's the first country on the African continent that we have such an agreement with. We're looking forward to entering more of these agreements with Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Ethiopia. ■

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units in the United States. Davis added that Habitat for Humanity has become a leader in housing development. As an example, she noted that in the 1990s Habitat for Humanity had become the biggest home builder in Atlanta. Much of the housing construction sponsored by CDCs is subsidized by the government—however, they also receive support from other sources. The Fannie Mae Foundation is a large supporter of CDCs across the country. Banks and faith-based institutions are also important contributors.

Despite these efforts, in many communities the need for affordable housing is not being met, in part because the private, for-profit sector is not fully engaged. As a solution, Davis suggested that "low-income inner-city communities see themselves as more than just places to live, but as emerging markets." Employing this "market paradigm," many neighborhoods can use assets such as nearness to the city's core, access to transportation, cultural amenities, and architectural uniqueness to attract the private capital needed for sustainable development.

Barbara Sard said that government policies have had an enormous impact on rental housing for people with low incomes—between $15,000 and $20,000. Chief among these policies is a major housing reform bill enacted by Congress in 1998 that shifted discretion down to the heads of the nation's 3,500 public housing agencies. With this new authority, these officials have the power to decide what kind of people can live in public housing, the income criteria for tenants, whether they have to be working, how much rent they have to pay, and how much housing vouchers will subsidize. It also affects housing stock—how much of it will be retained, how much will be renovated, and how much will be demolished. Some fear that poor tenants will be replaced by families with moderate and middle incomes. It is important that as these officials draft their annual Public Housing Authority plans and five-year consolidated plans, public hearings should be held and tenants encouraged to have input into the development of the plans.

Sard also discussed how Section 8 housing vouchers had been devalued during the current economic boom. Having a voucher, which many low-income renters rely on, doesn't equalize access to housing as it once did. The problem is that in today's economy, rents are bid up, and too many people in this income bracket are being priced out of the rental housing market. Meanwhile, neither the government nor the private sector is increasing the housing stock by building new units for low- and moderate-income renters, said Sard.

Among the participants who were not on the panel, Yusuf Salaam, president pro tem of the Selma, Alabama, city council complained that too much attention has been focused on urban communities. African Americans in the South's black belt, he said, "have had to make the jump from the post-sharecropping society to a digital economy without the intermediate step of an industrial revolution."

Education—A Lifelong Commitment

The key to advancement is education. Since the vast majority of American children, of all colors, are in public schools, the students and teachers in these institutions must be provided with sufficient resources to ensure that every child receives a quality education.

Moderator
Clarice Chambers
President
National School Board Association

Panelists
Lois Harrison-Jones
President
National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE)

James Oglesby
Professor, University of Missouri, and
Program Director, National Science Foundation

A former superintendent of the Boston and Richmond (Virginia) city school systems minced few words in declaring that "the state of education for the masses of black children is generally unacceptable." Speaking on behalf of the National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), Lois Harrison-Jones kicked off a frank discussion on public school education. Addressing an audience of about 40, many of whom identified themselves as public school administrators and school board members, Harrison-Jones and James Oglesby of the University of Missouri shared their ideas on the problems confronting black students and suggested ways to ameliorate them.

"We can spend our energies seeking and implementing improvement strategies or we can continue our tirade of accusations and scapegoating," Harrison-Jones said. She cited several causes underlying the poor academic performance of African American children. They included: low expectations of students, inadequate teaching by poorly prepared and inexperienced teachers, lack of infrastructure to support quality education, inadequate leadership in schools and local districts, lack of long-range education planning in local school districts, and failure to connect education to lifelong success.

Harrison-Jones weighed in against reform movements her organization has deemed to be counterproductive to improving education. NABSE opposes education vouchers and has sought to curtail school takeovers by state governments and other political jurisdictions. "The relatively small group of students benefitting from a voucher program hold little prospect for improving the education of the masses of children in any substantial way," she said. She argued that states should scale back takeovers and devise less disruptive alternatives.

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Drawing upon his own life experiences growing up in South Carolina and his background as a faculty member in the School of Education at the University of Missouri, Oglesby sought to inspire audience members to make a stand on behalf of public school students poorly served by their schools. "We have to make the system work for all children," he said. Citing studies which showed that black children consistently lag behind others, Oglesby invoked the words of the late African American activist Malcolm X. "We have to do something for our kids by any means necessary," he said. Like Harrison-Jones, Oglesby stated his opposition to school vouchers and urged restraint by state governments that are considering takeovers of poorly performing school districts. He added that the increased use of testing by the states has added to the political pressure states are experiencing to intervene into local districts.

"We have high-stakes testing. I'm interested in what we can do before we get to the possibility of a takeover," he said. Oglesby told the audience that in his capacity as a National Science Foundation (NSF) administrator he sees far too few science and information technology grant applications coming from predominantly black school districts. "Many of us don't like to write grant applications. But NSF is putting out tons of money to [support technology programming] and professional development," he said.

Wealth Accumulation and Economic Parity

For the past three decades, black Americans have focused much effort on achieving economic parity with the rest of society. Despite those efforts, the average income among African Americans is 68 percent that of whites, and the disparity in accumulated wealth is even greater. The current economic boom may offer African Americans the best opportunity ever to reduce those gaps, according to the participants in this workshop.

Moderator
Roger Campos
Executive Director, Minority Business Roundtable
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Panelists
Courtland Cox
Director, Minority Business Development Agency
U.S. Department of Commerce

Timothy Webb
Managing Partner
BW Financial Group

To take advantage of the opportunities offered by this booming economy, the panelists agreed, African Americans must change the way they do business—as individuals and as a community. "This is one of the best times for African Americans to make a dent in the wealth gap," said Timothy Webb of the BW Financial Group. "We are seeing the economy grow at an incredible pace—akin to the times when the railroad was expanding, the Industrial Age of the 19th century. Those who are mentally prepared for this growth will be the ones best able to take care of themselves and their families."

Webb said individuals must become more willing to accept a certain amount of risk in their personal investments and in seeking business opportunities. And the black community must create the infrastructure that both encourages and nurtures entrepreneurship. Courtland Cox, director of the Minority Business Development Agency, concurred, saying that the solution begins with a change in attitude. First, according to Cox, African American entrepreneurs must become more open to forming partnerships and joint ventures with other entrepreneurs in order to build the capacity necessary to compete in today's marketplace. Second, they must look for opportunities in the global market, taking advantage of the technological advances that make those markets accessible. Finally, African American entrepreneurs should develop market opportunities in their own communities. "The African American market is estimated at half a trillion dollars," Cox said. "The smart move is to focus on our own community more than any other marketplace. Often, we fail to recognize our singular advantage there."

Significantly, the respective emphases of the panelists revealed a generation gap. Describing himself as a member of the civil rights generation who had participated in voter registration drives and lunch counter sit-ins down South, Cox said that one of the greatest barriers to minority business development arises from discrimination in the equity capital and lending industry. "The government can and must play a role in leveling the playing field," said Cox. "Without access to capital, nothing else is going to happen. Capital is the lifeblood of any business."

On the other hand, Webb described himself as a member of the "thirty-something generation" and a beneficiary of the activism of the civil rights movement. He gained his financial expertise at such mainstream institutions as the accounting firm of PricewaterhouseCoopers and Bank of America before forming his own financial management firm. Webb insisted that market opportunities open and close so quickly that African Americans cannot wait for the government to act. "We're beyond social programs at this moment," said Webb. "We're in the midst of a technological revolution. People are interacting on a global scale. If the playing field isn't level, don't play on it. Create your own playing field."

The two approaches are not mutually exclusive. In fact, taken together they provide a blueprint for the future. For example, Cox noted that the equity capital industry claims that it does not do more business with minority firms because it does not have enough information to assess risk factors. He called for surveys and studies to collect that

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information. At the same time, he said the community must continue to hold the industry accountable, through local, state, and federal government oversight, if necessary. "We cannot develop good programs without strong information," Cox said. Meanwhile, Webb said, individuals need to look for opportunities aggressively and creatively.

"The assets are there," said Webb. "For example, I know a church, a major denomination, that is holding $80 million in assets, and only $10 million of that is encumbered. And they don't know what to do with that money. We are not creating an infrastructure, a system, that exploits our assets. This means churches interacting with banks interacting with foundations." Here too, he said, information is key. "There are a whole lot of financial instruments and tools out there but the information is not being shared," Webb said. "For example, there is no reason the church can't teach financial management on Saturdays."

Learning and Earning: Color Still Matters

Discrimination remains one of the most significant barriers to political and economic progress for people of color. This is not the time to abandon affirmative action, but to reexamine and reform strategies to remedy racism.

Moderator
Christopher Edley
Professor of Law
Harvard University

Panelists
Edgar Beckham
Senior Fellow
Association of American Colleges and Universities

Naomi Tutu
Program Coordinator, Race Relations Institute
Fisk University

David Nassef
Vice President
Pitney Bowes

Affirmative action remains an important and effective remedy to discrimination. But proponents need to do a better job selling affirmative action to the general public, according to experts attending a workshop examining the effects of such programs in higher education and the workplace. "Civil rights conservatives have been much better than civil rights progressives at articulating the underlying values of their position to the general public," said Christopher Edley of Harvard University. "Those who believe, as President Clinton said, that we should mend affirmative action, not end it, must become more effective at crafting messages that tap into the values that all Americans believe in."

Participants agreed that the case for such programs can be made if proponents focus on three messages: (1) that affirmative action is still needed, (2) that it works, and (3) that it benefits everyone—not just target groups. "Those of us who support affirmative action are in a reactive mode," said Naomi Tutu of Fisk University, "constantly responding to court decisions or statements from the other side. This is an inherently weak position."

"There is a very good reason affirmative action is under attack," said David Nassef of Pitney Bowes. "It is under attack because it is working. If it wasn't working, opponents wouldn't be trying to unplug it." Affirmative action programs in government procurement and hiring were launched in the early 1970s as part of the Nixon Administration's response to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972. Such programs can be a court-ordered remedy to specific discriminatory acts, or they can be a voluntary program to achieve diversity. In 1978, the Supreme Court's *Bakke* decision allowed race to be used as one of many factors as a remedy to discrimination. But a string of lower court decisions has raised considerable questions about the constitutionality of voluntary efforts, particularly in higher education, pupil assignments in grades K through 12, and the public sector. Said Edley, "It is inevitable that the Supreme Court will take a case that will decide once and for all whether *Bakke* remains good law or whether affirmative action is a dead letter."

The panel discussion centered on the ways affirmative action benefits educational institutions and the general public. For example, Tutu described a series of dialogues about race between students from predominantly black Fisk University and predominantly white Belmont University, both in Nashville, Tennessee. The project helped prepare both sets of students to become players in a multi-ethnic, global marketplace, according to Tutu. "We quickly discovered that the majority of white students had virtually no experience in mixed company," said Tutu. "They never had to deal with other ethnicities. The vast majority of whites never have to think about being white. For the vast majority of blacks, racial identity is one of the first things they put on in the morning, along with their underwear."

Similarly, Edgar Beckham of the Association of American Colleges and Universities called for an expansion of the traditional concept of affirmative action, beyond the "mere numerical presence of a target group." He said institutions of higher education need to think of diversity in terms of processes and outcomes. "By process, we mean the full integration of diversity into the institutional mission, curriculum—into every domain of institutional activity in such a manner that it enhances education for everyone," said Beckham. He went on to say that the success of such a program would go beyond grade point averages and graduation rates. It would require an understanding of

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factors such as employment, leadership, community participation, and the degree to which perspectives are enhanced or broadened for all students. William G. Bowen, a former president of Princeton University, and Derek Bok, a former president of Harvard University, coauthored *The Shape of the River: Long-Term Consequences of Considering Race in College and University Admissions*, in which they demonstrate that race-sensitive college admissions policies are successful and benefit society as a whole. Beckham said more work can and should be devoted to quantifying and measuring such outcomes.

Nassef described the evolution of affirmative action in the private sector. In the 1970s, the main concern of corporations was to avoid lawsuits from aggrieved employees. In the 1980s and 1990s, corporations embraced diversity because it was the right thing to do. Today, he said, corporations see diversity as essential to their bottom line in the competitive, global marketplace. As the corporate perspective on affirmative action evolved, the strategy broadened from concern about how employees are treated to include external relations, such as reaching out to diverse vendors and maintaining good rapport with diverse communities. "The mission went from 'do no harm,' to 'do good,' to 'do it for economic survival,'" Nassef said.

The workshop discussion suggested areas for future study. For example, the panelists agreed that before proponents of affirmative action can become more persuasive before the public, they need more data about how such programs benefit everyone. Some of that research is in progress. Duke University is looking at affirmative action's effect on student achievement, using the deeper criteria recommended by Beckham. And the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania has received a grant to study the relationship between diversity and the corporate bottom line.

"Working through issues of difference and race is not easy," concluded Edley, author of *Not All Black and White: Race, Affirmative Action and American Values*. "It isn't rocket science. It is harder than rocket science. It means talking these issues through before hostile audiences, working through strategies. Most of the time we engage in choir practice. We need to work on our missionary practice, as well."

The IT Revolution: Will It Leave the Underserved Behind?

The information technology (IT) revolution, spurred by the development of the Internet, is dramatically transforming society. Between 1997 and 1999, according to industry research and U.S. census data, the number of Internet users in the U.S. jumped from 52 million to 100 million. It is estimated that by 2004, that number will increase to 177 million and the volume of Internet traffic is projected to grow more than 10-fold. But along with this rapid growth have come growing divisions characterized by race and income. African Americans and other people of color, particularly those with lower incomes, are lagging greatly behind in taking advantage of this IT explosion. Many are becoming lost on the wrong side of what is being called the "digital divide."

Moderator
George Campbell, President & CEO, National Action Council for Minorities in Engineering.Inc. (NACME)

Panelists
Darien Dash
Chief Executive Officer, DME Interactive Holdings, Inc.

Bruce Lincoln
Senior Educational Technologist,Institute for Learning Technology, Columbia University

S. Reginald Williams
Chief Executive Officer, nuRules.com

At this workshop, moderator George Campbell described how commonly used Internet expressions such as "http," which were enigmas just six to seven years ago, are now ubiquitous—seen in newspapers, magazines, on television, heard on the radio. He noted how Internet traffic is doubling every three months, and how e-commerce—the purchasing of goods electronically via the Internet—has boomed to a half-trillion-dollar industry, surpassing telecommunications and the airline industry. The Internet growth rate has seen 68 percent annual increases in revenue and a 78 percent increase in employment. "I don't think there's been anything in my lifetime that has permeated our consciousness as rapidly as this business of the Internet," said Campbell.

However, the downside of this growth is that communities of color overall have not participated in this activity. "The good news is that computer penetration is increasing in our communities," Campbell said, "but the bad news is that the gap continues to widen." Not only are these communities underrepresented as Internet consumers, they are underrepresented on the other end of the spectrum as well—the professional or revenue side of merchants, owners, and entrepreneurs. Campbell noted that this has obvious implications for economic development in our communities. He said a dramatic expansion of the pool of engineers from communities of color— "some 14,000 more per year"—is needed, and called for private- and public-sector investments of $300 million over the next five years to ensure that this happens. This is critical to address the nation's rapidly expanding high-tech worker demands, he argued, adding that such an effort would similarly stimulate the participation of minorities in IT industries and foster the development of minority cyber entrepreneurs. He

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introduced Bruce Lincoln, Darrien Dash, and S. Reginald Williams, three African Americans, as examples for how this can work.

Lincoln opened by quoting Marcus Masiah Garvey, who in 1919 said African Americans "need to produce a premier class of scientists and engineers to harness the science of capitalism for the economic benefit of a people recently released from bondage." Lincoln then added, "if Garvey were alive today his Black Star Line would be an Internet company, the company would be publically traded and would have close to a billion dollar valuation."

Lincoln described how he has worked for over two decades developing multimedia digital products, including in 1988 the first-ever Afrocentric (profiling African achievers throughout the Diaspora) multimedia CD-Rom, which he produced for Apple to run on the Macintosh. Presently, he is working with others in developing "virtual reality" products for educational purposes, and pushing for the creation of "technology markets" in the African American community that are "driven by products, goods, services, information that are in tune to our social needs, our psychocultural needs, and our liberation." He is working on a project called "Harlem Renaissance 2001," designed to provide computer access for adults living in the Harlem community.

Darien Dash, the 28-year-old owner of Digital Mafia.com, also spoke at the workshop. The only African American publicly traded Internet company on the stock exchange, Digital Mafia is a company which, following a successful initial public offering in 1999, went from a valuation of $12.5 million to $250 million in six months. Dash first heard of the "paradigm shift" that would soon sweep the country, and eventually the globe, while a student at the University of Southern California's leadership institute. "While I was in the institute, I learned from people who were changing theory in this country, about the paradigm shift, about the trends, the megatrends as they called them, that were going to be taking over society. And how we were going from an industrial to a technological age."

Following graduation he moved to then-cable leader Telecommunication's Inc. (TCI), which was working on a 500-channel superhighway, broadband digital information and entertainment distribution, and digital compression. Dash worked in TCI's digital music compression division, DMX, but he became frustrated with the company's outlook. "When I wanted to market the digital service that TCI was marketing in rural areas, and they wouldn't market it in the same ways in African American and Hispanic communities as they would in general-market rural communities, it concerned me, so I quit. And I started my company."

His mission statement for the business he self-funded for the first four years was to expand the hardware and software infrastructure in minority communities, with the core service of interactive services. His job was to "go out and ring the bell within African American businesses and to the African American entrepreneurs that 'make the market' for our generation [including entertainment moguls such as Sean 'Puff Daddy' Combs], to tell them, 'Hey, you got to put your stuff on the web.' ...They were looking at me like I was crazy for the first three years."

But two years ago, more emphasis in financial circles started being placed on the Internet, and a year ago things began to take off. Today, Dash noted, black young adult culture has become, as it has with past generations, the "flavor of the moment, but that this time blacks have to captitalize on it, and strike while the iron is hot." He explained that there is 75 percent market share of a trillion dollars, when one looks at combined computer sales to African Americans and Hispanics. Nobody is tapping into that. It represents 45 to 50 million people who still do not have 'infrastructure'—who don't have machines, who don't have Internet access, who aren't provided with content on a daily basis. "Nobody 'owns' those customers," Dash emphasized. "Nobody's providing the services that are making it 'hot' for those customers. So here we have this great opportunity that we may never see again as a people . . . we have an opportunity to buy steel before they build the railroad."

Dash closed by noting that last year, 300,000 jobs went unfilled in the IT industry's signature production corridor, Silicon Valley. He said, "It's our responsibility to change the game— in the year 2000 it's the Internet. The money can come fast. . . . Last year, 1,600 businesses went public in the Internet sector; only seven were minority businesses. The money is here. Venture capital is definitely focused toward this segment right now."

S. Reginald Williams is a Harvard College and Harvard Law School graduate and the president and founder of the Flavor group and nurules.com, which markets music, music videos, and apparel, and distributes articles and news online. Williams explained that his launch last year of an online Internet-based business allowed him to distribute products immediately in markets where traditional approaches would have taken him years. E-commerce was key to this opportunity since it allowed for the immediate purchase of the products he offers.

Williams explained the digital divide this way: "While a new term is not a new concept, it's a manifestation of a problem that's existed for decades, if not centuries. That is, inequity between the economically empowered and the economically disempowered, which exists largely on a racial basis." He noted that the inequity here involves not only lack of access but lack of content on the Internet.

African American content needs, however, are beginning to be addressed by a number of black-owned ventures, he said, and are giving us a reason to want to go online. However, "desiring to get online and being able to get online are two different issues," Williams explained— thus, the problem of access. Part of the problem remains that personal computers, still priced at an average of about $800, remain prohibitive to many, as do Internet access fees of $20 per month. Further, "even for those who have

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Internet access, there's the regular band and broad band divide," referring to the divide between those who can and those who cannot afford the equipment and service that allow for fast streaming of "real time" video and audio. "A lot of people can't enjoy that because they only have 28K or 56K modems, which leads to another barrier," he argued. Finally, he noted, educational barriers are among the most severe problems affecting access—with 44 million Americans functionally illiterate. "If they have educational limitations, and don't understand the clicks of a mouse, then they cannot harness the power at their fingertips." And while e-commerce generated half a trillion dollars in revenues last year, Williams lamented that if someone doesn't have a credit card, "they cannot access this vast amount of resources."

Solutions to these problems, said Williams, include donating computers to community centers, schools, and libraries. Still, because it is much more convenient to have a computer in the home, Williams recommended that individuals and communities become aware of programs like pcfriendly.com, free-dsl.com, doubleclick.com, and others that give away free Internet access and/or free computers, or offer them at a minimal charge. Even Web-TV, he said, which for $150 allows a user to operate a wireless keyboard remote for web surfing via a televison screen, is another option, he noted. Being proactive in our local communities by having computer kiosks in what Williams described as "lifestyle destinations" such as barber shops and restaurants—places where Internet access is not normally available, and people have a lot of down time—is another option. One example Williams offered, "is ironically, on Wall Street, at a Burger King, which has about 20 computer terminals for people to harness Internet access while they're eating lunch. And if they purchase a 'value meal,' they get 20 hours of Internet access." Finally, he offered, a debit card system that allows people Internet access would go far in closing the divide. "That is something that helps someone who is not only disenfranchised, and unable to get a credit card, but also people who have security concerns about the Internet," Williams explained, adding, "If we had a debit card system similar to a phone card system, where people could get a $20-$30 denomination, buy a CD here, buy a book there, that would largely change people's ability to access the Internet, with or without a good credit rating."

Williams closed by noting that the digital divide and lack of Internet access are a community and a national policy problem, and as with Campbell, Lincoln, and Dash, called for actions of solidarity that include people going into our communities to individually and collectively assist in addressing these problems.

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Special Session

HIV/AIDS in the African American Community

Some of the nation's most respected activists and health-care professionals in the area of HIV/AIDS gathered at this workshop to present their findings in the fight against the spread of the disease in the black community.

Moderator
George Strait
Board Chair, Kaiser Family Foundation

Panelists
Jennifer C. Friday
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

William Cunningham
UCLA Departments of Medicine and Health Services

Jeffrey Levi
Co-Director, Center for Health Services Research and Policy, George Washington University

Julia Hidalgo
President, Positive Outcomes, Incorporated

Victor Barnes
Acting Deputy Director of HIV/AIDS
National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention

Beny Primm
Executive Director, Addiction Research and Treatment Corporation

Cornelius Baker
Executive Director, National Association of People With AIDS

Jennifer C. Friday opened the session, presenting research that showed that the epidemic of HIV/AIDS is still the leading cause of death among young adults in the African American community. Friday stated that despite statistics which indicate a current downturn in AIDS deaths across all racial ethnic groups since 1996, the disease is still the leading cause of death for African Americans between 24 and 44. The main factors contributing to this high rate are injection-drug use and unprotected sex.

Friday discussed how black churches and social organizations have now entered the fight by providing counseling and other services in the black community. The Congressional Black Caucus has secured $156 million for a national AIDS education campaign. Furthermore, monies from federal programs, such as the Ryan White CARE Act, are helping to fund care at the state and local levels. In

wrapping up her presentation, Friday concluded, "We don't need a wake up call but a call to action."

William Cunningham documented that African Americans still have poorer access than others to healthcare despite national policy efforts over the past decade. "African Americans are being tested for the disease later in their illness, receive fewer medications for HIV, and report more barriers to care," he said. Blacks are more likely than whites to use emergency room care as their primary care in dealing with this disease. Other disparities are evident in obtaining medications, having access to drugs through clinical trial participation, and the quality of case management.

Cunningham also stated that HIV infections among African Americans are still increasing and noted that the death rate from AIDS is still higher for blacks than for whites as the epidemic reaches its third decade. "There is a need for a comprehensive continuum of services," said Cunningham. "Medicaid eligibility is often tied to disability and all too often African Americans are medically needy when they are advanced in the condition of HIV/AIDS." Cunningham argued that there is a need for systemic testing of interventions, such as case management, to overcome barriers, help reduce disparities, and improve access and outcomes.

The financing and delivery of HIV care in the African American community were discussed by Jeffrey Levi and Julia Hidalgo. Medicaid is the largest single payer of HIV care for African Americans with the disease. "The interrelationships of programs and the availability of Medicaid are at the core of clinical care," said Hidalgo. Financial barriers remain, she noted, and there is an uneven distribution of resources, especially across state lines. "Where you live determines the release of federal monies and access to care," she said.

"For example, states receive monies from federal resources such as the Ryan White Care Act, Medicaid/ Medicare and the SAMHSA Block Grant (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services) to fight the disease. Spending on HIV related care in fiscal year 1999 was in the neighborhood of $7.9 billion. However, there are too many administrative barriers to securing the available funds, and the interstate variability often makes disability offices 'go shopping' across state lines to expand their capacity to provide managed care. Providers need state and local policy options to assure quality care."

Hidalgo added that the government could step in to help alleviate the disparity and level the playing field by setting and enforcing a common level of standards. The panelists who responded included experts in the HIV/AIDS field, such as Beny Primm, Victor Barnes, and Cornelius Baker. Their recommendations included calls for the eradication of the discrepancies in access, testing, treatment, and care. "There needs be a shift in bureaucratic and social attitudes," said Barnes. Primm called for measures like non-invasive testing, especially for the indigent population, and testing for diseases like Hepatitis C. ■

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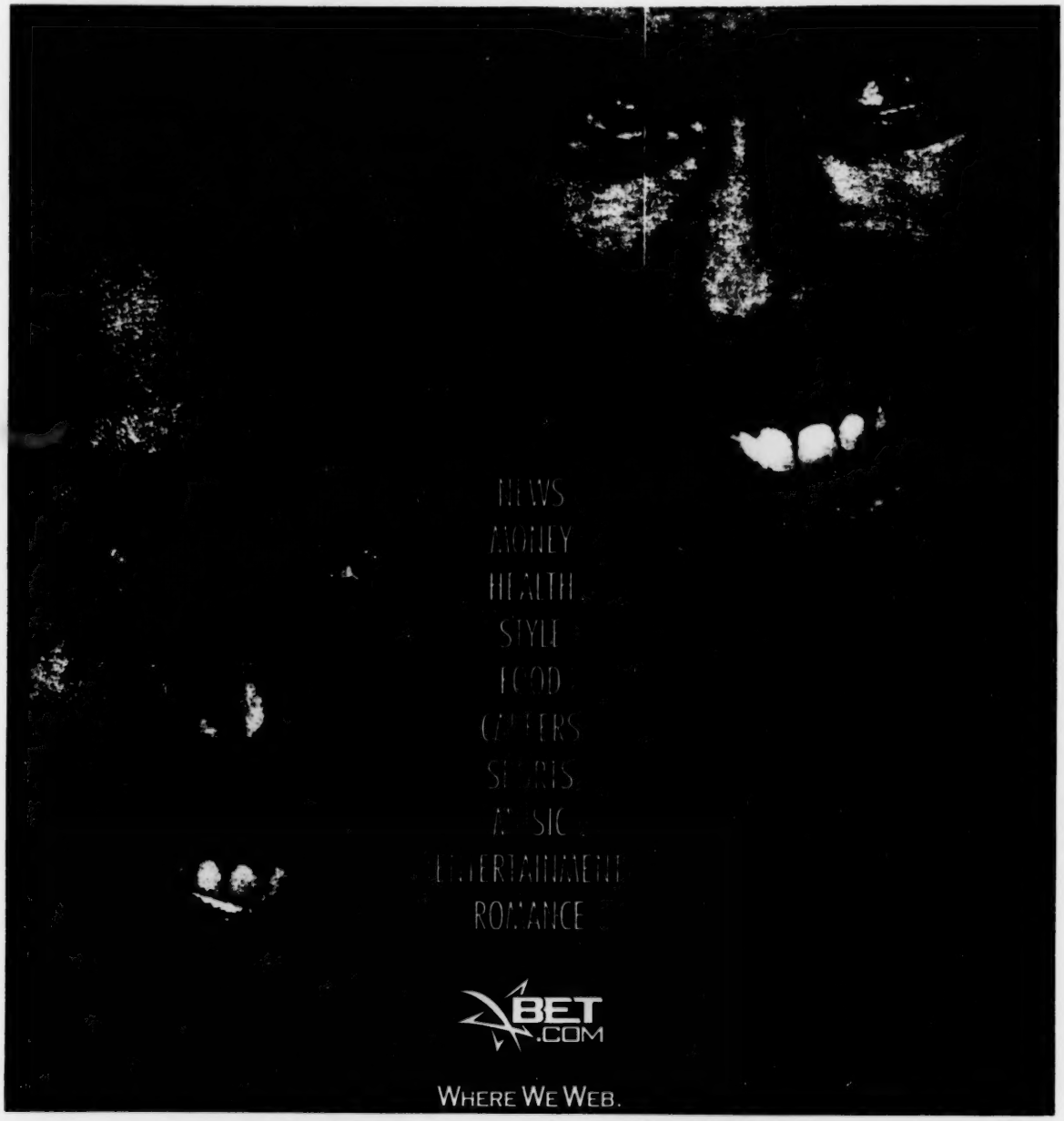

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